RUGBY AUSTRALIA JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS

U9 & U10

Laws and Game Management

RUGBY AU

JUNIOR · BAND 2 OF 6

U9 & U10

The scrum and the throw-in arrive, both uncontested. Kicking is still not permitted. A coach from each team is still on the field for the full match.



COACH

Game Intent: Play with team mates

Player Opportunity: Develop skills in game contexts

Development Priority: Core skills, decision making and game sense

Coaching Environment: Encourage effort, teamwork and enjoyment

Develop players through positive coaching

REFEREE

Officiating Intent: Keep the game moving

Referee Opportunity: Officiate regularly with support

Development Priority: Core signals, restarts and tackle law

Match Environment: Explain, encourage and teach through the whistle

Build skills, work with others and feel a part of the game

U9 & U10 JUNIOR RUGBY

Law Set

What the law is, how it can be broken, the sanction, and how play restarts.

RUGBY AU

U9 & U10 Sanctionable Laws

CONTACT AND OPEN PLAY

Tackle	PK
Fend or palm	PK
Tackle and ruck, WR offences	PK
Tackle and ruck, junior variations	FK
Maul, general play only	PK
Offside	PK
Kicking in general play	FK

SCRUM

Engagement	FK
Push, no movement through the mark	FK
Binds	FK
Ball use	FK
Crooked feed	FK
Offside line, 5m	PK

THROW IN (Modified Lineout)

Safety	PK
Skill execution	FK
Ball use	FK
Offside line, 5m	PK

Restart after every sanction. Tap and pass at the mark, in line with or behind it. Defenders retreat 5m and wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball by the first receiver.

U9 & U10 Contact and Open Play, 1 of 3

KEY LAW **Tackle height is below the base of the sternum at every age group, U8 to U18.**

Tackle

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 14, 9.13

Below the base of the sternum. No sling tackle. No squeeze ball.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Tackle contact made at or above the base line of the sternum (chest, shoulder, neck or head).
- **Sling tackle:** the tackler grabs the ball carrier and rotates or swings them, creating a dangerous spinning motion.
- **Squeeze ball:** the tackled player squeezes the ball back between their legs, or lays the egg, putting their body in a dangerous position.

Fend / Palm

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 9.24

A fend must not be made to the face or neck of the defending player.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A fend or palm directed at the face or neck of the opponent.
- A fend or palm delivered with excessive or disproportionate force, more than is necessary to hand off the approaching defender.

Tackle and ruck: World Rugby offences

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 15 AND 16

Sanctioned as they are in World Rugby Law.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The tackler fails to release the ball carrier or fails to roll away.
- A player enters the contest other than through the gate, that is, not from behind the hindmost point of their own players.
- A player in the contest is not on their feet, lying on the ground at or over the ball.
- The ball is played with the hand or hands after a ruck has formed.
- A player intentionally falls on or over the ball, or deliberately collapses the ruck.
- A player attempts to kick the ball out of the ruck.

U9 & U10 Contact and Open Play, 2 of 3

Tackle and ruck: junior variations FK

NO WORLD RUGBY EQUIVALENT

A maximum of 2 players from each team may contest the ruck, excluding the tackler. A defender who jackals before a ruck forms may run or pass.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A 3rd or subsequent player from one team joins the tackle contest, not counting the tackler.
- The player acting as halfback runs with the ball once a ruck has formed.
- An attacking player picks and drives from the ruck.
- Defending players who are not part of the tackle contest and who are in front of the ball are offside and must not participate in play.

Maul WR

WORLD RUGBY LAW 16

Players abide by World Rugby Law and the Game Management Guidelines focus areas. A Maul can only occur in general play.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Deliberately collapsing a maul.
- Joining a maul other than through the gate.
- A player on the ground in or around the maul while the ball is being used.
- The tap and pass is not taken at the mark where the maul formed
- Obstruction: preventing opponents from reaching the maul without binding.
- Pulling an opponent into the maul who is not already in contact.
- Failure to use the ball within 5 seconds after the referee calls “use it”.
- A team takes the ball into a maul and the ball does not emerge.

Kicking in general play FK

NO WORLD RUGBY EQUIVALENT

Kicking the ball during general play is not permitted at U9 & U10.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Any player kicks the ball during general play, whether a punt, grubber, drop kick, chip kick, or any deliberate contact with the foot that propels the ball.

U9 & U10 Contact and Open Play, 3 of 3

Offside: tackle contest

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 14.10 AND 15.4

The offside line is the hindmost point of the players in the ruck or tackle.
Where no ruck forms and a defender jackals, the defender may run or pass.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- From a ruck, a defending player advances before an attempt is made to catch the ball.
- From a scrum, a defending player advances before the halfback passes the ball and an attempt is made to catch the ball.
- From a throw in, a defending player advances before an attempt is made to catch the ball.
- Defending players who are not part of the tackle contest and who are in front of the ball are offside and must not participate in play.

Offside: restart kicks

PK

NO WORLD RUGBY EQUIVALENT

Scoring team kicks (drop-kick).
Receiving team must be 5m from half way.
Kicking team move forward in line with the referee, holding 5m from receiving player.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Players on the receiving team not back 5m when the ball is kicked.
- Players on the kicking team moving up past the referee or closer than 5m of the player attemping to catch/receive the ball.
- Players on the kicking team are in front of the player kicking the ball.

RESTART MECHANICS

Penalty Kick. Non-offending team must tap and pass at the mark.
Defenders retreat 5m.
Defenders wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball.

Free Kick. Tap and pass at the mark.
Defenders retreat 5m.
Defenders wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball.

U9 & U10 Scrum Laws, 1 of 2

Scrum: Binds

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.7

Crutch binding is allowed in all junior and youth age groups. Any team may choose to waist bind, but the opposition may continue to crutch bind.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Bind other than by an approved crutch bind or waist bind on the prop immediately in front of them.
- Players within the same team do not use the same bind.
- A player drops or releases their bind before the ball leaves the scrum.
- Elbows are not maintained in an upward position during the bind.
- A player binds with only one arm rather than a full two arm bind.

Scrum: Engagement

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19

The scrum must be engaged and stable. No deliberate push is permitted. The hooker must strike for the ball with their foot. The team feeding the ball must win the scrum.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A prop does not crouch, bind and set correctly before engagement.
- The scrum is not stable at engagement.
- The defending hooker strikes for the ball.

Scrum: Feed

N/A

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.15

The ball is fed from the left hand side of the scrum and thrown down the middle of the tunnel so the hooker can strike for it.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The halfback does not feed the ball down the middle of the tunnel.

U9 & U10 Scrum Laws, 2 of 2

Scrum: Push

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19, 19.19

The scrum must be engaged and stable. No deliberate push is permitted.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A team deliberately pushes the scrum.

Scrum: Offside Line

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.27

The offside line is 5m from the last feet of the scrum. The defending team must wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball from the scrum.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A defending player advances beyond the 5m offside line before an attempt has been made to catch the ball.
- A defending forward breaks away from the scrum before the ball exits.
- An attacking back who is not the halfback positions in front of the back feet of the scrum.
- The defending halfback does not start at the mid point of the scrum.

Scrum: Ball Use

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 19.36

The halfback must pass the ball to the first receiver from the back of the scrum. No scrum moves are permitted.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The halfback runs with the ball rather than passing to the first receiver. The halfback may take half a step to generate the power needed to pass.
- A forward picks up the ball from the back of the scrum instead of the halfback.

U9 & U10 Lineout Laws, 1 of 2

Lineout: Safety

N/A

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18.19

Not applicable. There is no formed lineout, no jumping and no lifting at U9/10.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- Not applicable

Lineout: Skill Execution

N/A

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18, 18.23

On a throw from touch, the player from the team not in possession when the ball crossed touch must pass to a teammate, and that pass must travel a minimum of 2m infield.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The pass travels less than 2m infield from the line of touch.
- The pass is not directed to a teammate, instead being thrown into open space or towards an opponent.

Lineout: Ball Use

FK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18

The player must pass the ball into the field of play to a teammate, who may then run or pass.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- The player fails to pass the ball infield to a teammate, including throwing to themselves.
- The pass is directed out of the field of play rather than infield.

U9/10 Lineout Laws, 2 of 2

Lineout: Offside Line

PK

WORLD RUGBY LAW 18.30

Defenders and attackers each stand 5m back from the line of touch. The defending team may advance once the ball is in the hands of the first player within the field of play.

HOW IT CAN BE BROKEN

- A defending player advances beyond the 5m mark before the ball is in the hands of the first player within the field of play.

U9/10 JUNIOR RUGBY

Game Management

How the game is set up, run and managed on match day.

RUGBY AU

Team and squad numbers

ON THE FIELD

10

Players per side. Numbers must be matched, and teams share players to reach the maximum.

Law 3.1–3.2. Senior maximum is 15; a match organiser may authorise fewer.

SQUAD SIZE

13

Suggested maximum match day squad.

Not a World Rugby Law. A participation guideline, not set by the Laws of the Game.

REPLACEMENTS

Unlimited

Movements at any stoppage, except a free kick or penalty.

Law 3.4–3.5. Under World Rugby Law, replacements are made when the ball is dead.

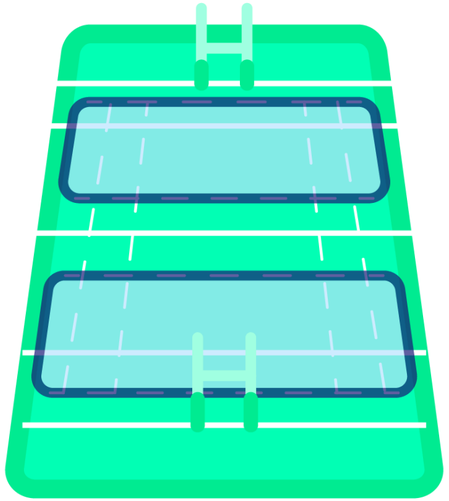
MINIMUM TO PLAY · AND THE SCRUM THAT FOLLOWS

Minimum numbers for a game is 7 players per team.

7	players per team 3 person scrum
8	players per team 3 person scrum
9	players per team 5 person scrum

Match set up

PLAYING AREA · HALF FIELD



Half field. Uncontested five player scrum, no formed lineout, no kicking in general play.

Law 1.3. Senior field is a maximum 100m x 70m; 1.3(b) allows approved variations.

BALL SIZE
Size 3

Male and female.

Law 2.3–2.4. Smaller balls permitted for young players.

PLAYING TIME
40 min

Two 20 minute halves.

Law 5.1–5.3. The organiser may reduce match length.

WARM-UP
20 min

Maximum warm-up time.

Not a World Rugby Law. Match day logistics.

INJURY TIME
None

None is played. Applies U8 to U18.

Law 5.5(a). Senior: up to one minute.

SCORING
Try only

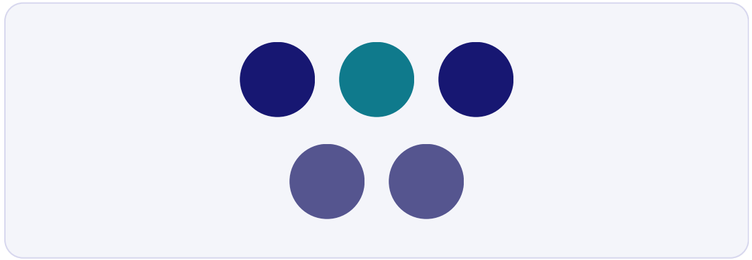
No conversions, penalty goals or field goals. Score kept, not published.

Law 8.1. The score must be known on the field.

Scrum and lineout set up

SCRUM **UNCONTESTED**

5 players per team, at all times



2 props

1 hooker

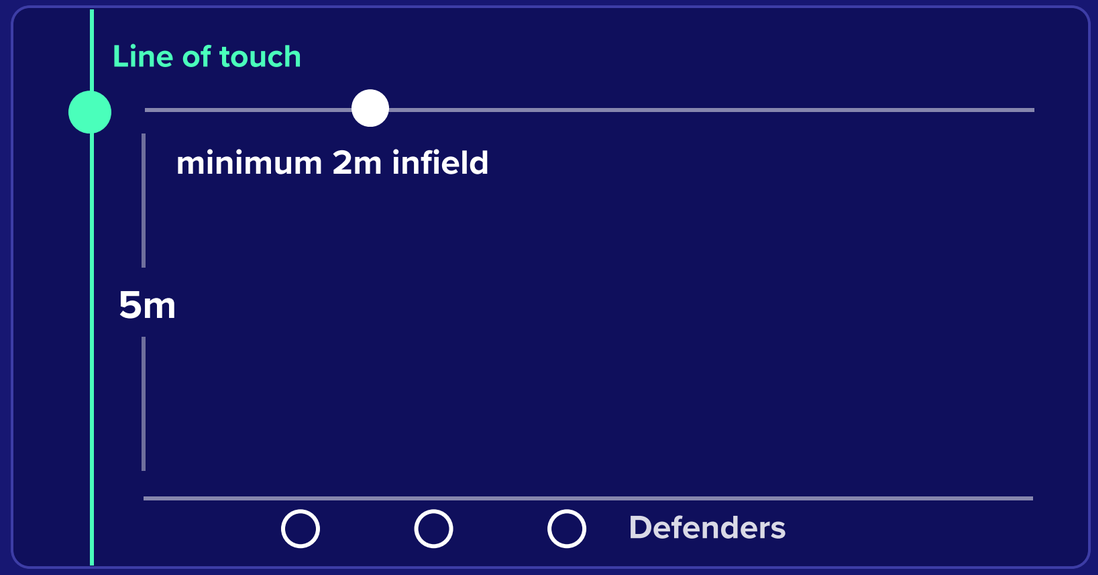
2 second rowers

May Day is taught from U9. Uncontested scrums following a card or injury do not apply here — the scrum is already uncontested.

Law 19.5–19.6 (8 players in the senior game, reduced to a minimum of 5); Law 3.15–3.20.

LINEOUT

No formed lineout at U9/10



One player from the team not in possession throws in from the line of touch and must pass to a teammate. The pass travels a minimum of 2m infield, and the throw cannot be closer than 5m from the goal line.

Law 18.3–18.16 (quick throw mechanics and forming a lineout).

The on-field coach

One coach from each team is on the field for the full duration of every match, across the season. They guide players and reinforce the match official's decisions.

Not a second referee

✓ The on-field coach may

- Give short, in the moment guidance to their own players, and to opposition players where it helps play continue safely.
- Explain a decision to players in language they understand, after it has been made.
- Reposition players, prompt them into the correct formation, and help them get set for a restart.
- Alert the match official to a safety concern at any time.

× The on-field coach may not

- Overturn, reverse, question or debate a decision of the match official.
- Award or signal any decision, sanction or score.
- Direct play from within either defensive line, or interfere with the ball, players or space.
- Coach the opposition's tactics, or delay a restart to give instruction.

ACCREDITATION · REQUIRED

- **Smart Rugby**
- **Season Ready**

ACCREDITATION · RECOMMENDED

- **Coaching Kids Rugby**
- **Junior Law Facilitation Workshop**

Cards and concussion

Yellow card

Managed by the team coach and the referee. Time on the sideline while the coach explains why. The period is at their discretion. The player can be replaced.

Not recorded in Rugby Xplorer at this age group.

Law 9.29. Senior sin bin is 10 minutes; reduced junior time penalties are a modification.

Red card

Same management as a yellow card: sideline time, the coach explains why, at the discretion of the coach and team officials. The player can be replaced.

Rare at this age group. Not recorded in Rugby Xplorer.

Law 9.30.

Blue card

No blue card is shown at U9/10.

Managed by the referee with the on-field coach and the medic, first aid officer or trainer. The referee blue card applies from U13 and older.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed under WR Concussion Guidance and the RA CMP.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL · RA CMP

Applies to all rugby, at all ages.

Regulation 10, Law 3.11 and the RA Concussion Management Procedure.

Any player with signs or symptoms of suspected concussion must leave the field immediately.

The player can be replaced.

No person — medic, first aid officer, trainer, coach or doctor — can override this.

Graduated return to play: minimum 21 days for players aged 18 and under.

Game Balance Law

MAXIMUM POINTS DIFFERENCE

50

Once the threshold is reached, the coach of the losing team chooses one of three options.

Not a World Rugby Law. An RA specific mechanic with no World Rugby equivalent. The score must be known on the field at every age group so this law can operate.

OPTION 1

Mix the teams

Teams are mixed and players are shared.

OPTION 2

Play on

Play continues. No changes to teams.

OPTION 3

End the game

The game is ended.

The referee's authority to stop play for safety reasons is unaffected and exists independently of this law.

MOUTHGUARDS

Strongly recommended

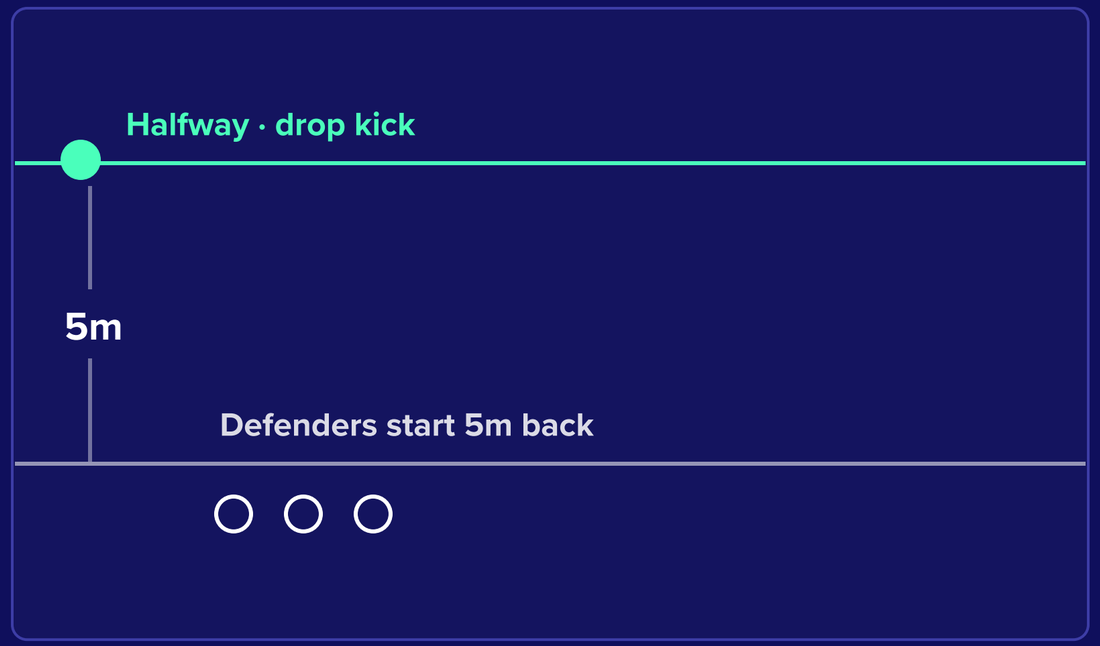
Not mandatory under national junior law, but all contact players should wear a properly fitted mouthguard. Some competitions make them compulsory — check local rules.

Law 4.3(f). A mouthguard is a permitted item of clothing; the senior Law does not mandate it.

Kick off and the tap restart

KICK OFF AND AFTER A TRY

NO CONTEST



Drop kick by the try-scoring team from the halfway point, and a drop kick must be attempted. Once the ball is kicked, defenders may advance in line with the referee. The receiving team must take possession.

Law 12.4 (restart after a score).

IF THE KICK GOES DEAD

The receiving team restarts with a tap on the halfway point, defenders back 5m. A second attempt may be permitted at the referee's discretion.

PENALTY AND FREE KICK · THE TAP

Tap and pass, taken in line with or behind the mark. Defenders back 5m and must wait until an attempt is made to catch the ball. This is the mechanic every sanction refers to.

Law 20.3–20.4, 20.8, 20.12 (senior: retreat 10m). An incorrect tap is brought back and retaken.

POSITIONING

No closer than 5m from the goal line and 3m from the touch line. The 3m minimum does not apply to a restart from touch. Scrums are set at the mark under World Rugby Law.

Law 19.2–19.4; Law 20 (penalty and free kick).

Restarting the game

ADVANTAGE

Not played for any foul play under Law 9 — except in the act of scoring a try, where a penalty try is awarded.

Where foul play occurs, stop play immediately and award the penalty kick. Advantage is played in all other circumstances, including knock-ons and forward passes.

KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS

Scrum, thrown in by the team not in possession at the time of the infringement. The scrum is set at the mark under World Rugby Law.

Law 11.1–11.2; Law 19.1 (which team throws in).

BALL CROSSES THE LINE OF TOUCH

No formed lineout. The throw in is passed at least 2m infield, and no closer than 5m from the goal line.

Law 18.3–18.16 (quick throw mechanics and forming a lineout).

IN-GOAL

No drop out. Tap 5m from the goal line to the team not in possession when the ball was taken in, in line with where it was made dead. Defenders back 5m.

Law 12.11–12.13 (22 metre and try line drop outs).

50M / 22M KICK

Not applicable

There is no kicking in general play at U9/10.

Law 18.8(a).

Age and dispensation

AGE GROUP WINDOW

Best practice

Play within a one year age window.

Acceptable practice U9 & U10

Play within a two year age window.

Exceptional practice

Three year window, following specific criteria in union policy, including consent and assessment.

World Rugby Player Welfare Guidelines, Age Differential Playing Guideline.

U9 Players turning 8 or 9 in the calendar year can participate. Acceptable practice, eligible age grades.

U10 Players turning 9 or 10 in the calendar year can participate. Rugby Australia's Size for Age guidelines also apply at U10.

AGE GRADE DISPENSATION

Two grades up, or one grade down, needs approval

Size for Age guidelines apply, including mandatory assessment where required.

SCHEDULE B

Front row assessment

Any player intending to play two single age grades up in a front row position requires Schedule B assessment and approval.

Gender participation

Mixed gender

Boys and girls may be selected in the same team and play with and against each other. The RA Participation Policy starting position: males and females may participate in mixed gender rugby up to and including the calendar year in which they turn 12.

MIXED GENDER DISPENSATION

Not applicable at U9/10

Mixed gender participation is the starting position at this age group, so no dispensation is required.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed by the RA Mixed Gender Dispensation Procedure.

GENDER IDENTITY

Play in the gender you identify with

Where the age group is played as mixed gender, dispensation is generally not engaged. Where a single gender competition is offered, the Gender Identity Dispensation Procedure applies.

Not a World Rugby Law. Governed by the RA Gender Identity Dispensation Procedure.

RUGBY AUSTRALIA JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS

U9/10 JUNIOR RUGBY LAWS SET